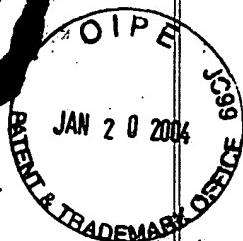


3653A

PATENT  
Customer No. 22,852  
Attorney Docket No. 08049.0011



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: )  
Oscar Lee Avant et al. ) Group Art Unit: 3653  
Serial No.: 09/652,707 ) Examiner: Daniel K. Schlak  
Filed: August 31, 2000 )  
For: APPARATUS AND METHODS FOR )  
PROCESSING MAILPIECE )  
INFORMATION BY AN )  
IDENTIFICATION CODE SERVER )

Commissioner for Patents  
P. O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

**RESPONSE TO THIRD RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT**

In a third restriction requirement dated November 18, 2003, the Examiner required restriction under 35 U.S.C. § 121 between three groups of claims: Group I containing claims 1-20, 113-142, and 227-241, Group II containing claims 21-68, and Group III containing claims 173-226. The Examiner further stated that claims 69-112 and 143-172 are linking claims that link Groups I and II.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants note that the Examiner did not mention claims 242-262. In an attempt to avoid the issuance of yet another restriction requirement, Applicants suggest that claims 242-262 would fall into Group I as the Examiner has characterized it. Therefore, this response is based upon the assumption that Group I includes claims 1-20, 113-142, and 227-262.

Applicants respectfully traverse the restriction requirement because the Examiner has not shown that there would be any burden to examine all of the claims. In particular, the

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Examiner has classified the claims of both Group I and Group III in class 700, subclass 224.

Thus, the Examiner would undertake the same search for the claims in these two groups, and no undue burden would be experienced.

However, Applicants wish to avoid spending any further time on the restriction/election process. Therefore, Applicants elect to prosecute the claims of Group II, including claims 21-68. Furthermore, Applicants request examination of claims 69-112 and 143-172, characterized by the Examiner as linking claims between Groups I and II.

Applicants submit herewith a Petition for One Month Extension of Time for responding to the Restriction Requirement with the requisite fee. Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,  
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

  
By: Reg. No. 38,742 /ter  
Lionel M. Lavenue  
Reg. No. 46,859

Dated: January 20, 2004

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